



FACEBOOK

Sexual Health + Identity

This Woman Was Allegedly Harassed in a Restroom Because Someone Thought She Was Transgender

Wrong on so many levels.

BY BRITTNEY MCNAMARA

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Though there are no reported incidents of transgender people attacking others in public bathrooms, the incidents of transgender people being attacked while trying to use the restroom are **well documented**. Now, thanks to **the atrocious bills** that have made bathrooms a political battleground, we have a report of a woman who was harassed in a public restroom because someone allegedly wrongly suspected she is transgender.

Mic reports a 22-year-old Connecticut woman was verbally harassed on Friday while washing her hands in a Walmart bathroom. Aimee Toms was wearing a baseball cap over her newly shorn hair because she had just donated it to cancer victims. Another woman in the bathroom apparently took Aimee's good deed as her cue to express her transphobia.

"She said 'you are not supposed to be here you need to leave,'" Aimee said in a **video posted on her Facebook**. The video response to the incident has now garnered nearly 50,000 views. "I realized when I was washing my hands...she thought I was somebody who was transgender.

According to the *News-Times*, the woman went up to Aimee and said "you're disgusting" and "you don't belong here" before flipping her off.

In the wake of bathroom bills that prohibit transgender people from using the bathroom that corresponds with their gender identity, Aimee's inference that the attack came from the assumption that she is transgender makes sense. Political fervor around the issue has raised tensions and prompted many to take sides. In fact, when **Target announced** it would allow transgender people to use the bathroom that corresponds with their gender identity in all its stores, a **petition to boycott the store** circulated and garnered more than 1.2 million signatures.

In her video, Aimee makes a really important point that allowing transgender people to use the bathroom that corresponds with their gender identity does not invite crime into bathrooms, which is an argument many are using to pass discriminatory bills.

"So, I think what a lot of people are getting all up in arms about is they're like, 'oh this gives an invitation to guys to put on a wig and go into the women's bathroom,'" Aimee said. "If a guy was going to commit a crime in a women's bathroom, this law isn't going to invite them to do it."

Aimee says she knows this because she was nearly assaulted by a man in a women's room before any of these bills were put in place.

"This law wasn't in place a year ago when I almost got raped in a bathroom because a man followed me into the women's room," she said.

Aimee also compared the current fight for transgender rights to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s when black Americans fought for the right to occupy the same spaces as white people. She draws a parallel, noting that transgender people are simply trying to exercise their rights as human beings to safely live their lives the same way any cisgender person can.

"Do you understand how many crimes have been committed against transgender people in bathrooms? Do you know how many transgender people have been assaulted and killed for who they are?" she asked. "And you have the audacity to say you don't want to use the bathroom with them?"

The answer to Aimee's questions is that in the first five months of 2016, **10** transgender people have been reported murdered, and the numbers are climbing. And that only accounts for murders, not to speak of **assaults, transphobic slurs and the other slights and injustices** that transgender people experience daily.

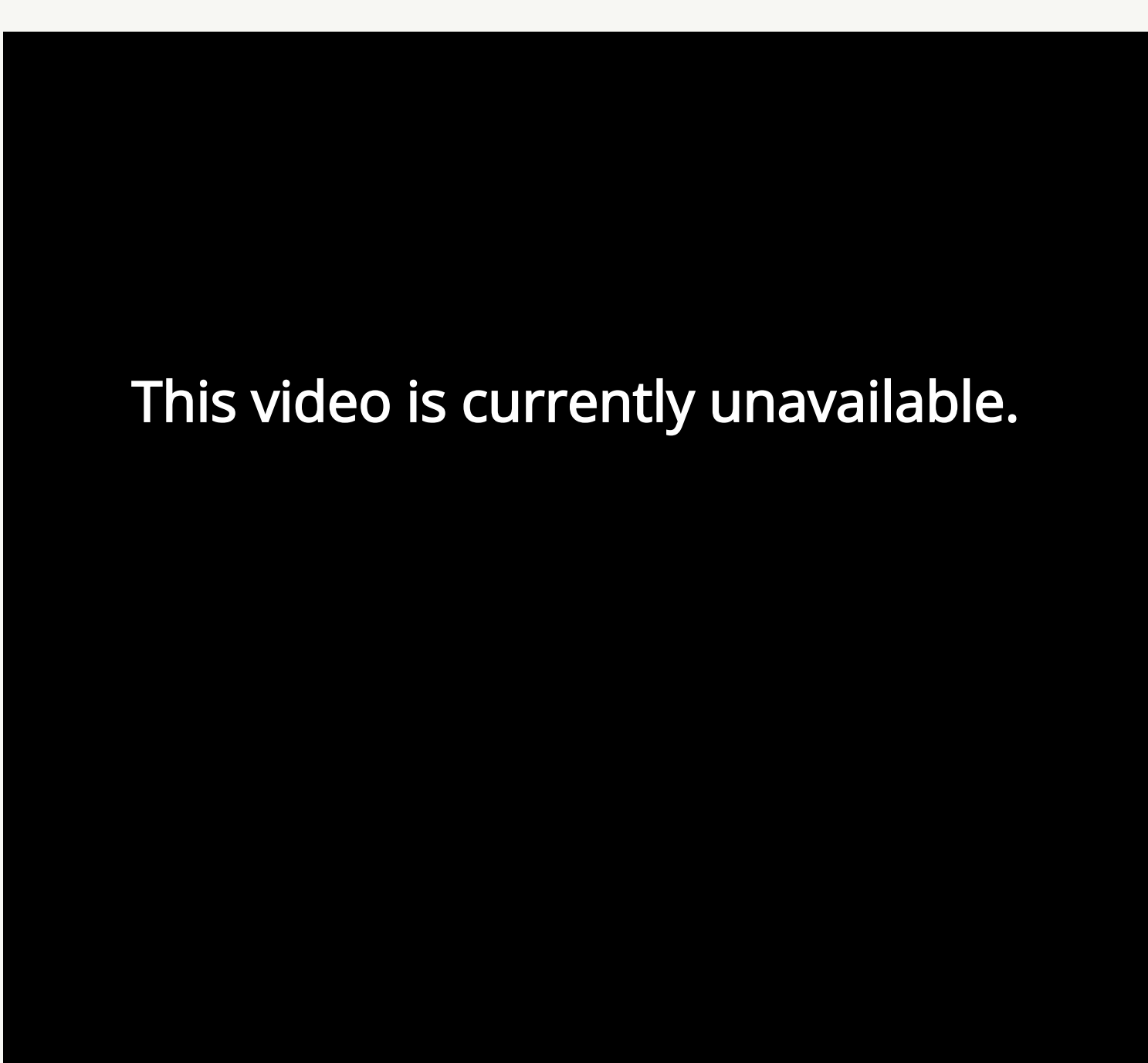
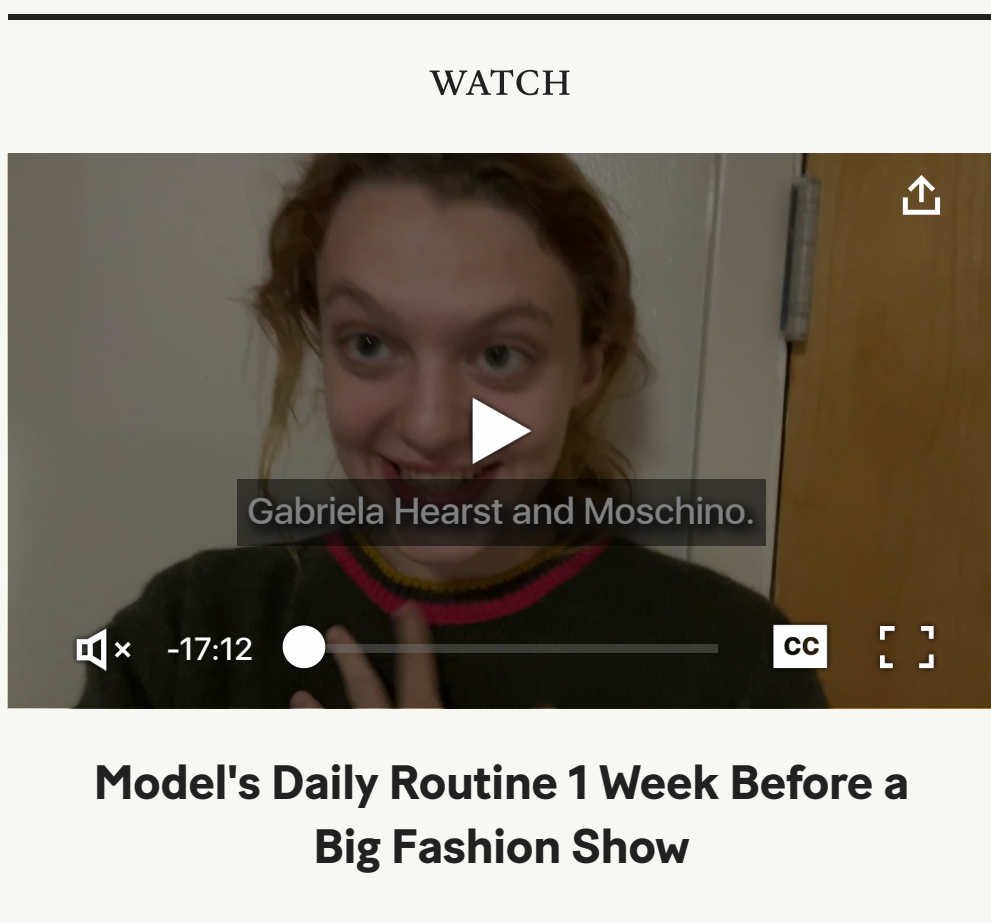
"I cannot fathom how much discrimination transgender people must face in a lifetime," Aimee said. "Can you imagine going out every day and having people tell you that you should not be who you are?"

This is exactly why it's important to listen to transgender people and respect how they ask cisgender people to be allies. This fight is real, and the **consequences for transgender people** are very serious. Instead of creating more fervor and hatred, we can hope and lobby for more states to take the direction that **California did recently**, moving closer to making bathrooms gender neutral instead of gender battlegrounds.

Related: Everything You Need to Know About Transgender Bathroom Rights

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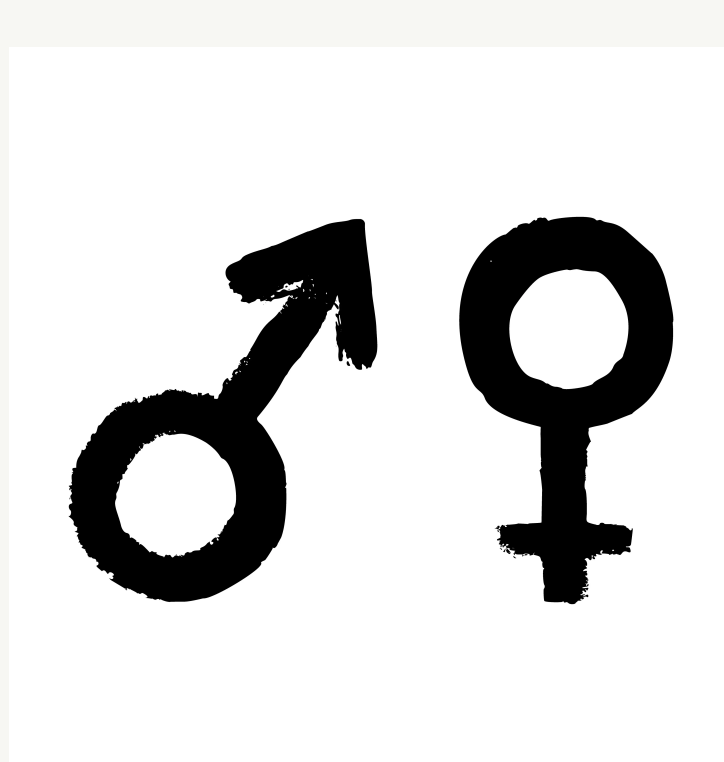


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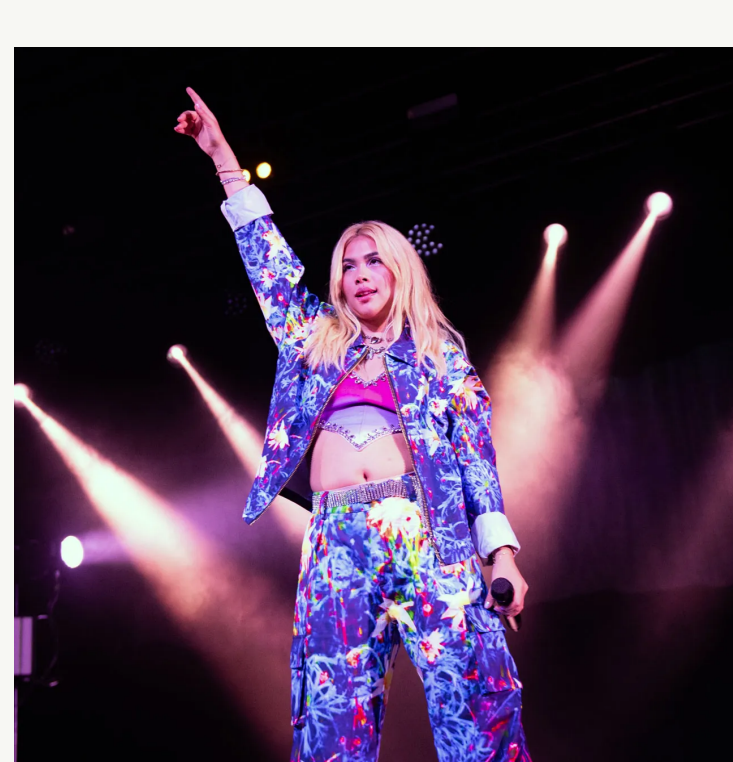


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